



Voting Information News

August/September 2005 vs Vol. 15, No.8

A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.

Issue Highlights:

2006-2007 Voting Assistance Guide	1
Slogan Contest Winners Announced	2
45-Day Ballot Transit Time	3
FPCA and FAQ Go Hand in Hand	3
Legislative Initiatives Go To Congress	4

Voting Assistance Officers

"To Do" This Month:

☒ Remind new arrivals in your area to notify their local election officials of their new mailing address because election materials generally cannot be forwarded in the mail. The FPCA contains a small postage-paid perforated post card that can be used to request a mailing address change with the local election official in your voting residence state.

☒ Have you requested a Voting Training Workshop in your area? Please email vote@fvap.ncr.gov as well as your Service Voting Action Officer (contact information on Page 3) to submit your request. A regional Workshop schedule is now being planned with training to begin this Fall.

(continued on next page)

2006-07 Voting Assistance Guide Coming Soon!

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) is currently in the process of coordinating the 2006-07 edition of the *Voting Assistance Guide* with the Chief Election Officials in each of the states and territories. The state officials are reviewing their sections and updating it with procedural and address changes which have occurred since the printed 2004-05 edition of the *Guide* that was distributed in 2003. Production and printing of the *Guide* is scheduled to begin in October with distribution to the Services and Service Voting Action Officers in November. We are striving to have the *Guide* distribution complete before the holiday mail rush to allow ample time for Voting Assistance Officers to plan and implement their 2006 voter outreach efforts prior to the early primary elections in 2006.

The *Guide* is the most important source of procedural information available to Voting Assistance Officers and citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*. The new and improved *Guide* is designed to be more user-friendly than ever. Chapter Three contains specific state-by-state procedures and instructions for UOCAVA citizens to apply for registration and request an absentee ballot from their state of residence. The new edition also features FVAP products and services and vital information for Voting Assistance Officers to be used in the performance of their duties. The *Guide* provides a copy of the UOCAVA law (as amended by the *National Defense Authorization Act* and the *Help America Vote Act of 2002*), primary and general election calendars for 2006, and procedures for using the Electronic Transmission Service (faxing and emailing service).

Production of the *Guide* requires extensive coordination with state and local government officials to ensure the information is both accurate and in an easy-to-follow format. The up-to-date *Guide* will help UOCAVA citizens to better understand and participate in the democratic process. It will be available in book format and on the FVAP's website at www.fvap.gov. The new *Guide* will also be included in the E-Learning CD-ROM (to be available at a later date).

Once the revised *Guide* has been issued, copies of the previous edition of the *Guide* (if available) can only be used for educational purposes. Since some of the information in the previous *Guide* edition is outdated, it should not be used to assist UOCAVA voters.

Once the *Guide* is printed it will be available through normal distribution channels. Check with your Installation Voting Assistance Officer or your Service Voting Action Officer (see Page 3 for contact information) to ensure that you are on the distribution list for the *Guide* and other voting program materials. U.S. citizens' organizations overseas should contact the FVAP to obtain voting publications. ☒



Share your best practices! Send your best practice(s), novel ideas and lessons learned to your Voting Action Officer. Contact information is on page 3.

"To Do" This Month

(continued):

☑ If you are a new Voting Assistance Officer, review the online Training Workshop presentation for VAOs at the FVAP Website www.fvap.gov to obtain a brief orientation of the program. Chapter Two of the *Voting Assistance Guide* (also online) provides an overview of your responsibilities as a VAO.

☑ Be sure to keep your voting continuity folder up-to-date by keeping all important voting information in the folder. Put a copy of each *Voting Information News* in the folder. This will help to ensure your successor receives a quick orientation of his or her voting responsibilities upon your departure.

☑ Check to be sure all persons you assist (including family members) are aware of upcoming elections and have the necessary knowledge and materials to participate in these elections. Several states will hold elections for state offices this Fall.

☑ If you currently receive this newsletter by mail and would prefer to receive it via email, please contact us by email at:

vote@fvap.ncr.gov.

You may receive the newsletter by mail, electronically, or in both formats. Online versions of the newsletter and news releases are also available on the FVAP website, www.fvap.gov.

Slogan Contest Winners Announced

On July 11, 2005 the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) 2005 Slogan Contest concluded. The Voting Slogan Contest is a biennial event sponsored by the FVAP in its efforts to promote interest in the democratic process among citizens covered under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)* – the members of the Uniformed Services, the Merchant Marine, their family members, and all U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. The winner of this year's slogan contest will be featured in the FVAP's 2005/2006 informational and motivational materials, which focus on increasing voter awareness among U.S. citizens worldwide. Additional slogans will be featured in the state sections (chapter 3) of the *2005-2006 Voting Assistance Guide*.

The FVAP received thousands of entries from around the globe for this year's slogan contest, promoting voter awareness. The Voting Assistance Officers' (VAOs) dedicated efforts in encouraging citizens to enter the contest helped generate the high participation rate and brought attention to the voting program, giving citizens a better idea where to find guidance and assistance on absentee voting.

The Winner of the 2005 Slogan Contest is Mr. Roy Clark, a Civilian with the US Navy in Jacksonville, FL for his slogan: **"Responsibility Has No Borders. Vote!"**

The FVAP would also like to recognize the following participants and their slogans.

2nd Place: **"A Strong Country Starts With A Strong Voice...Vote."** By Sgt. Nikki Gardner, USA, currently stationed in Iraq

3rd Place: **"Take Charge of America. Cast Your Vote."** By Maj Peter McDaniel, USMC, Twentynine Palms, California

4th Place: **"Our Country, Our decision, Our Vote."** By LTC Dennis M. Brown, USAFR, Minneapolis, Minnesota

The following slogans received Honorable Mention:

"What You Do IS Powerful. Vote" By Elizabeth R. Townsend, Hernando County Elections, Florida

"Vote. Express Your Freedom" By Beion Williams, DoDEA Schools, Fort Benning, Georgia

"Proud to Serve. Proud to Vote" By Sharon S. Brunson, CIV, USN, Anacostia Annex, Washington, DC

The FVAP thanks these seven individuals who graciously agreed to serve on the selection panel:

The Honorable Carl Levin,
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Robert W. Ney,
Chairman, Committee on House Administration

The Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen,
Member, House Committee on Government Reform

The Honorable Gracia Hillman,
Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

The Honorable Rebecca Vigil-Giron,
President, National Association of Secretaries of State

Ms. Gertrude Walker, President,
International Association of Clerks, Records, Election Officials and Treasurers

Ms. Peggy Conlon,
President and Chief Executive Officer, The Advertising Council Inc.

The FVAP also thanks all citizens from around the globe who submitted slogans. ☑

45-Day Ballot Transit Time - A Legislative Best Practice

A 45-Day Ballot Transit Time is needed. One of the most frequent problems faced by military and citizens that live outside the U.S. is that they do not receive their absentee ballots in time to mark the ballot and return it to their state by the election deadline. The FVAP post-election surveys and Postal Service statistics indicate that a **45-day transit time is needed** for absentee ballots sent through international mail or the military APO/FPO (overseas) post offices. The problem often lies with the date absentee ballots are mailed by the states.

This round trip transit time is especially necessary because of the remote location of many military personnel and overseas citizens such as sailors and marines aboard ship, airmen and sailors at isolated tracking sites around the world, as well as Department of State personnel and citizen employees of American multinational corporations in remote areas.

The FVAP recommends a minimum of 45 days between the date the ballot is mailed to the citizen and the due date by which the citizen must return the voted ballot to the local election official for it to be counted. Allowing for sufficient mail transit time would help ensure that more citizens' votes would be counted, especially for citizens voting from overseas. The FVAP also recommends that states expand this provision to allow a 45-day transit time for **all elections** in order to further ensure enfranchisement. FVAP Program Analysts work closely with state officials assisting them with written or verbal testimonies and providing sample language during the implementation process.

Thirty-nine states now allow 45 or more days ballot transit time for **general elections**. Of these, twenty

states provide 45 or more days of ballot transit time for **all elections**.

Under certain circumstances the FVAP may enter into an ad hoc agreement with a state or initiates court action through the Department of Justice to allow late counting. The FVAP will notify VAOs and the citizens regarding any agreements or changes by issuing news releases and publishing on the FVAP website and the *Voting Information News*.

To learn more about the states that have adopted and implemented this legislative best practice, see specific state by state instructions in Chapter 3 of the *Voting Assistance Guide* or the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov (select "Publications"). For other legislative best practices select "Legislative Initiatives" from the FVAP website. ☑

FPCA and FAQ Go Hand In Hand

The *How To Do It* brochure and the *Frequently Asked Questions* (FAQ) are available on the FVAP website, www.fvap.gov, in several formats.

The *How to Do It* color brochure is in PDF format and has a list of FAQ, introduction to the FVAP services and contact information. The brochure may be printed on 8½" x 14" paper (back to back). As an alternative, FVAP has created a condensed black and white version of this brochure with only the FAQs that will print on letter size paper (back to back). The FAQs are also available as a web page (HTML format) on the FVAP website. (continued on next page)

Voting Action Officers

Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey, **tel:** (202) 736-4937, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **Email:** markeyjd@state.gov
Deputy VAO: Ms. Linda Hoover, **tel:** (202) 647-5435, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **Email:** hooverlr@state.gov

Service Voting Action Officers

U.S. Dept. of the Army: Mr. James Davis **tel:** (703) 325-4530 **DSN:** 221-4530; **fax:** (703) 325-4532
DSN fax: 221-4532; **Email:** davisj@hoffman.army.mil,
<https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/pssd/psb/votingindex.htm>

U.S. Dept. of the Navy: LT Dwight H. Isaacs **tel:** 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672) (select option 6 from menu);
fax: (901) 874-6825, **DSN fax:** 882-6825,
Email: vote@navy.mil, <http://www.mwr.navy.mil/nvap/index.html>

U.S. Dept. of the Air Force: Mr. John Lowrance **tel:** (210) 565-5000, **toll free:** 1-800 616-3775 (Select options 1, then 1, then 2 from menu), **DSN** 665-5000; **fax:** (210) 565-2543, **DSN fax:** 665-2543;
Email: afpc/dpsfvotingpgmdlist@randolph.af.mil; <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/votefund/>

U.S. Marine Corps: Mr. Robert Wagner **tel:** (703) 784-9513, **DSN:** 278-9513; **fax:** (703) 784-9827,
DSN fax: 278-9827; **Email:** wagnerro@manpower.usmc.mil
https://lnweb1.manpower.usmc.mil/manpower/mi/mra_ofct.nsf/mrp/Voting+Home

U.S. Coast Guard: CWO Carol McFadden **tel:** (202)-267-1652, **fax:** (202) 267-4823;
Email: cmcfadden@comdt.uscg.mil, http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wp/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting_Assistance.htm

Federal Voting Assistance Program

Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC
20301-1155

PHONE:
(703) 588-1584
DSN 425-1584

FAX
(703) 696-1352
DSN 426-1352

VOTING INFORMATION
CENTER (VIC):
(703) 588-1343
DSN 425-1343

TOLL FREE (VIC and FVAP
staff member):
1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

Visit our website for
international toll-free phone
and fax numbers.

EMAIL:
vote@fvap.ncr.gov

Comments or suggestions on
this newsletter are welcome.

Website:
www.fvap.gov

Vote!

FVAP Forwards Legislative Initiatives to Congress

In our March 2005 issue of the *Voting Information News*, we presented legislative best practices that, once implemented by the state legislature, would considerably improve and standardize the absentee voting process for UOCAVA citizens.

These legislative best practices were provided by the FVAP to the Chief Election Official in each state and territory as recommended legislative initiatives that should be considered by their state legislatures.

The states have considered these legislative initiatives as they apply to their state. Bills have been introduced in many state legislatures to change laws that might impede absentee voting by UOCAVA citizens. FVAP is pleased to

report that progress has been made in changing some requirements that can make absentee voting difficult for UOCAVA citizens.

State Governors or chief executives have reported the progress made in easing the absentee voting process for UOCAVA citizens. FVAP, as required by the *National Defense Authorization Act for FY-2002*, has forwarded these Governors' reports to Congress. These reports keep the Senators and Representative(s) from the states apprised of the progress being made and allows these elected officials to work with their states in removing any remaining impediments.

FVAP will continue to work with the states to simplify and improve the absentee voting process for UOCAVA citizens. ☑

FPCA and FAQ Go Hand In Hand (continued)

You may copy and distribute any of these formats for your voting activities.

VAOs are encouraged to use the FAQ Handout and place their contact information and distribute these along with the Federal Post Card Applications

(FPCA) during their registration drives or when contacting individuals one on one.

To download these documents go to www.fvap.gov. Select "Publications and Forms". ☑

Moving? Send an FPCA to notify your local election official. Also, send us an email so that you and your replacement can continue receiving this *newsletter*.

Federal Voting Assistance Program
Department of Defense
1155 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1155



U.S. Postage Paid
39 USC 3406

PAR AVION

OFFICIAL VOTING INFORMATION MATERIAL – FIRST CLASS MAIL

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY IN THE U.S. MAIL – DMM 703.8.0